# February 8, 2014
# Freedom to Marry
# Interfaith Worship Service

Hosted by: Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley
930 North 4th Street ♦ Allentown, PA 18102
610-709-8800 ♦ info@mcclv.org ♦ www.mcclv.org

**ORDER OF SERVICE**

**Gathering Music—MCCLV's B.A.S.I.C. Choir**

**Welcome & Brief Remarks**

**Call to Worship**

**Processional Song "Come & Go With Me To That Land"**

**Opening Prayer**

**Reading—Psalm 100**
Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth.
Worship God with gladness;
come into God's presence with singing.
Know that the Most High is God.
It is God who made us, and to God we belong;
we are God's people, and the sheep of God's pasture.
Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,
and God's courts with praise.
Give thanks to God, bless God's name.
For God is good;
God's steadfast love endures forever,
and God's faithfulness to all generations.

**Reading—Nelson Mandela**
The time for healing of the wounds has come.
The time to build is upon us...We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people
from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination...
There is no easy road to freedom...
None of us acting alone can achieve success.
We must therefore act together as a united people,
for reconciliation, for nation building,
for the birth of a new world.

**Reading—Ted Olson**
Many of my fellow conservatives have an almost knee-jerk hostility toward gay marriage. This does not make sense, because same-sex unions promote the values conservatives prize.

Marriage is one of the basic building blocks of our neighborhoods and our nation. At its best, it is a stable bond between two individuals who work to create a loving household and a social and economic partnership. We encourage couples to marry because the commitments they make to one another provide benefits not only to themselves but also to their families and communities. Marriage requires thinking beyond one's own needs. It transforms two individuals into a union based on shared aspirations, and in doing so establishes a formal investment in the well-being of society. Conservatives should celebrate this. Legalizing same-sex marriage would also be a recognition of basic American principles, and would represent the culmination of our nation's commitment to equal rights. It is, some have said, the last major civil-rights milestone yet to be surpassed in our two-century struggle to attain the goals we set for this nation at its formation. This bedrock American principle of equality is central to the political and legal convictions of Republicans, Democrats, liberals, and conservatives alike.

**Children's Blessing**

**Blessing of Singles**

**Giving Opportunity**

**Song "Love Can Turn the World"**

**Blessing of Relationships**

**Introduction of Keynote Speakers**

**Keynote Address, Maurice Tomlinson & Rev. Tom Decker**

**Wedding Processional**

**- Bev Forster and Alexandra Hovak -**
**- Monica Biggs and David C. Akus -**

**The Call**

**Prayer**

**Poem—Shamaan Ochaum Climbing Eagle**

Keep your passion alive –
it will warm you when the
world around you grows cold.
It will not allow comfortable
familiarity to rob you of that
special glow that comes with
loving deeply. It can lift
you over stone walls of anger
and carry you across vast
deserts of alienation. But its
greatest gift is that of touch –
for passion cannot dwell in
solitude – it thrives best in
loving embrace. So keep your
passion alive – hold one
another as a tree holds the
Earth and your love will
bear the fruit of many,
many seasons.

**The Affirmation**

**Exchange of Vows**

**Blessing of Rings**

**Exchange of Rings**

**Final Blessing**

**Introduction of Couples**

**Closing Song "Be Thou My Vision"**

**Benediction**

**Tonight's Participating Clergy**

Rev. Mary Bohacek (Metropolitan Community Churches)
Rev. Robin Capoor (Unitarian Universalist)
Rev. Tom Cormier (Interfaith)
Rabbi Melody Davis (Union for Reform Judaism)
Rev. Elaine Ely (United Church of Christ)
Rev. Em Finney (United Church of Christ)
Rev. Don Garrett (Unitarian Universalist)
Rev. Jennifer Glass (Metropolitan Community Churches)
Rev. Elizabeth Goudy (Metropolitan Community Churches)
Rev. Bob Life (Metropolitan Community Churches)
Rev. Joanne Marchetto (United Church of Christ)
Rabbi Seth Phillips (Union for Reform Judaism)
Rev. Lloyd Steffen (United Church of Christ)
Rev. Lisa Weida (United Church of Christ)
Rev. Joy Wyler (Unity)

**From Reception Organizer Ashley N. Richard:**

A BIG thank you to all who donated delectable food/drink items! Many thanks also to all the hard workers who made the event possible, the set-up and clean-up crews and behind-the-scenes volunteers. Your love, support, friendships and willingness to lend a hand are much appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to coordinate an important event!
*Ashley N. RIchard*

- Appetizers are from Lee Gribben's on Main -

**Lee Gribben's on Main**
Gourmet Catering
194 Main Street
Emmaus, PA 18049
(610) 965- 5772

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER MAURICE TOMLINSON

**Maurice Tomlinson** is an attorney-at-law and has been involved in LGBTI and HIV and AIDS activism in Jamaica and the Caribbean for over 14 years. He is Legal Advisor, Marginalized Groups for AIDS Free World. Maurice also lectures Canadian Human Rights Law at the University of Ontario Institute Of Technology.

Tomlinson previously served as legal advisor to Jamaica AIDS Support for Life (JASL) as well as the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians All-Sexuals and Gays (JFLAG) which is the major LGBTI group on the island.

In December 2011, Maurice was awarded the inaugural David Kato Vision and Voice Award which recognizes outstanding leadership in advocating for the rights of LGBTI people.

In August, 2012 he was the Grand Marshall of the first ever Ugandan Pride event where he and other participants were detained by Ugandan police on the grounds that they were participating in a "gay wedding."

Maurice had to temporarily flee Jamaica in 2012 when a local newspaper published an unauthorized photo of his same-gender wedding to a Canadian. He has since returned to the island to continue his work for LGBT liberation and spends his time between Jamaica, Canada and Rochester, New York.

Tomlinson is counsel on the first ever challenge to Jamaica's anti-sodomy law filed before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and is also claimant challenging the Immigration Laws of Belize and Trinidad and Tobago which ban the entry of homosexuals. Maurice is also working on a documentation project to capture credible information on the level of human rights violations experienced by Caribbean LGBTI in order to inform the regional debates on the state of human rights for Caribbean LGBTI.

Maurice also travels around the Caribbean with his husband, Rev. Tom Decker, to deliver LGBT sensitivity training sessions for national police services.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER REV. TOM DECKER

**Rev. Thomas Decker** serves as the Interim Pastor of Open Arms MCC in Rochester, New York. He has brought his two Masters degrees in Applied Linguistics and Theology to bear as a lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Currently, he is working on his Ph.D. in Biblical Studies; focusing on the Book of Job and discrimination and stigmatization in the Ancient Near East. Recently, he worked for the Toronto Police Service as their LGBT Liaison Officer.

In consultation with leading LGBT community groups, Tom has actively worked to raise awareness surrounding issues of homophobia in the context of bullying and harassment in Canadian Schools. He has worked closely with the Safe Schools Action Team to reduce homophobic and gender-based victimization.

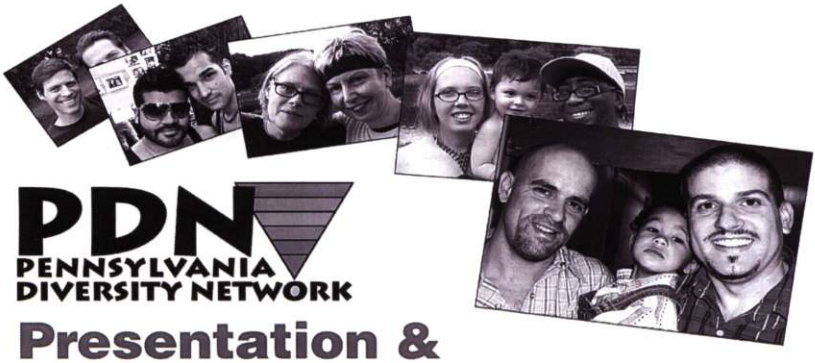
With the Toronto Police Hate Crimes Unit, he has worked to increase the reporting rate of hate crimes against members of the LGBT community. He also focused on LGBT youth suicide prevention and continually enhancing police response to same-sex domestic violence and partner abuse.

Rev. Decker has been instrumental in the development of the award-winning RHVP Program – Report Homophobic Violence, Period; a community-based hate crime reporting and prevention program that has spread throughout Canada, and has been received with great interest internationally.

Tom has also served with the international organization, Justice in the Balkans, advising all levels of government on issues around human rights protection of the LGBT population in the region. Furthermore, he has lectured extensively on religion-inspired homophobia and crime prevention issues affecting the LGBT community throughout the world.

Tom is married to Maurice Tomlinson, an international Human Rights Lawyer

**PENNSYLVANIA DIVERSITY NETWORK**
*Congratulates the couples who are marrying today!*



PDN
PENNSYLVANIA DIVERSITY NETWORK

# Presentation & Photo Project Exhibition

**Feb. 10-14, 2014**
**Celebration of Awareness, Advocacy and Equality**

## Speaker Presentation/ Opening Ceremony for the Photo Project

**Monday, Feb. 10, 2014 2 p.m.**
**Community Services Center, Rooms CSC 203/205**

**Liz Bradbury,**
*Executive Director of PA Diversity Network*
LGBT Coming Out Day Presentation and Photo Project Exhibition - a presentation on the LGBT Photo Project - Facing Inequality: Issues and Advocacy for Students, Faculty and Staff

## Photo Project Display

**National Award Winning Photo Project: 800 Same-Sex Couples Facing Inequality**

**The Photo Project will be on display in Community Service Center Lobby from Feb. 10-14, 2014.**

**This program is being sponsored by the LCCC PRIDE Club and is funded by the Student Government Association.**

Lehigh Carbon COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PDN encourages committed same-sex couples who want to legally marry to go to a marriage equality state & do so. See how at our web site at: www.padiversity.org. Even living in PA, legally married couples get many federal rights including: Immigration, Pension, Federal Tax filing, No taxes on benefits, & more. And your marriage will be recognized in PA when marriage equality is legal here, you will not have to marry again. Call PDN for more information: 610-432-5449.

**Tonight's Co-Sponsors, THANK YOU!**

PDN
PENNSYLVANIA DIVERSITY NETWORK

**www.padiversity.org**

EQUALITY PENNSYLVANIA

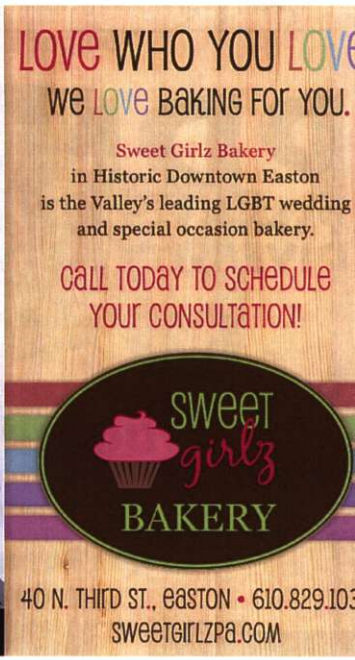
**www.equalityPA.org**

# ADRIAN E. SHANKER

Activist, Advocate, Organizer and Changemaker
working for Pennsylvania's LGBT Community

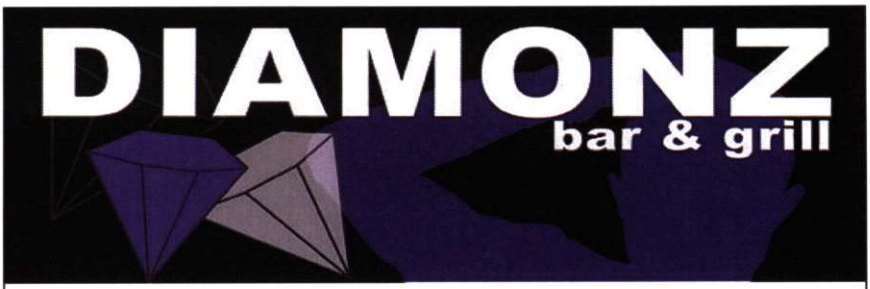
A **BIG THANK YOU** to LGBT advocate and community leader, **Adrian Shanker!** Adrian raised close to $4,000 to support a series of Lehigh Valley marriage equality events over this past week, including the Interfaith Freedom to Marry Worship Service.

Adrian has led successful campaigns to expand LGBT equality in cities, towns, colleges and school districts in Pennsylvania and has worked as a union organizer, non profit fundraiser, and political campaign operative. As an advocate for equality for the LGBT community, Adrian speaks and facilitates workshops at conferences, colleges, churches and synagogues, and union meetings on a variety of LGBT-themed topics. A New Yorker by birth, Adrian and his husband, Brandon, live in Bethlehem, PA.




**A big THANK YOU to SweetGirlz Bakery in Easton for the lovely (and delicious) wedding cake donation!**

Steve Libby is the is the chairperson for the 10th Annual Academy Awards Bash to benefit Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley on **Sunday, March 2nd** at the Allentown Brew-Works. Over the years the Bash has raised tens of thousands of dollars to help promote awareness and greater acceptance of the GLBT community. One of the most anticipated parts of the evening is the Silent Auction table. If you are able donate an item, gift certificate or service to the Silent Auction, **contact Steve at STL327@hotmail.com**.




**TONIGHT: After party at Diamonz nightclub, 9pm—2am for all who attend the Interfaith Freedom to Marry service and reception.**

**Free admission and free first drink with this program.**

**Stats from the Human Rights Campaign**

- 33 states – home to approximately two-thirds of the American population – still flatly reject marriage equality and the hundreds of protections and civil rights it gives couples and families.
- 29 states have no state laws protecting lesbian, gay and bisexual people from employment discrimination – and the number of states increases to 33 for transgender people.
- And in spite of our hard-fought federal protections, 35 states still don't protect transgender citizens with hate crimes laws that explicitly include gender identity and are essential to comprehensive protection for transgender Americans

The Human Rights Campaign | www.hrc.org

MCC®

METROPOLITAN
COMMUNITY CHURCH
OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

# Great Worship.
# Great Music.
# Great God.

## Sunday Service at 10:30am

## www.mcclv.org